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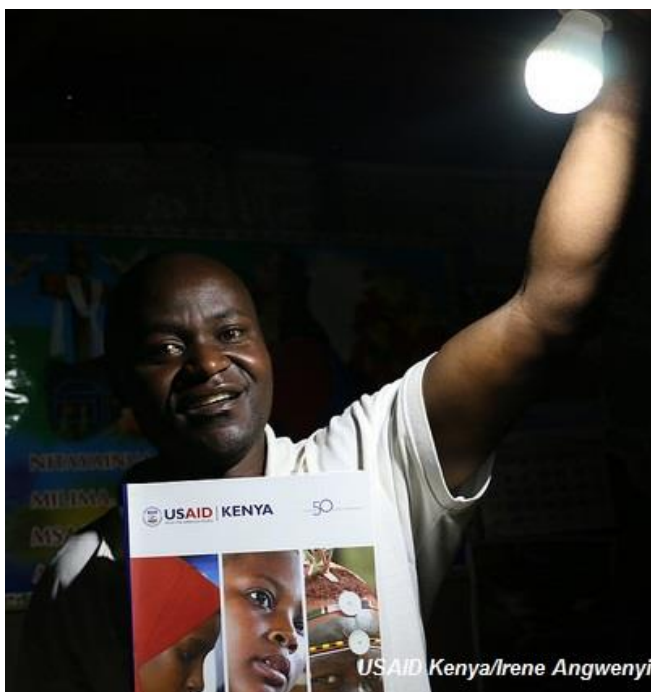
Journey to Self-Reliance in an Era of Great Power Competition

USAID is Helping Partners Build Self-Reliance

The purpose of foreign assistance should be ending its need to exist. Each country should lead its own development journey, and USAID is dedicated to fostering self-reliance to help move countries toward the day they no longer need our assistance.

This demands a sharper focus on helping to build capacity and commitment among our partner countries to implement their own development solutions. If we are successful, the societies we support will thrive and be able to expand prosperity autonomously and sustainably. We look forward to the day when we can change the nature of our relationship with self-reliant countries from assistance recipients to enduring diplomatic, economic, and security partners.

As USAID works with our partners, we must be attuned and responsive to conditions and influences that inhibit progress toward self-reliance.



Recognizing Forces that Undermine Self-Reliance

Unfortunately, we are seeing the harmful by-products of assistance from countries that offer a different model of development. The assistance offered by these countries does not foster the self-reliance of its partners. Instead, it serves only their interests, and ultimately leads to dependency, rather than autonomy. This self-serving approach is antithetical to one that prioritizes self-reliance, as we are unfortunately seeing over and over again.

Piling debt on top of debt: Instead of helping to build a country's own capacity to mobilize domestic resources, or attract private-sector investment, the alternative approach loads already-debt-burdened countries with more debt to fund infrastructure projects that benefit the lender more than the borrower.

- In Pakistan, a series of loans from China to finance the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has saddled the country with unsustainable debt that is approaching 70 percent of Gross Domestic Product.

Relinquishing of sovereignty: Instead of fostering a country's capacity to manage strategic and natural resources effectively, the alternative approach wrests control over those assets. Seizing valuable assets transforms development assistance from a tool to foster self-reliance into a tool that serves one country's strategic and economic ambitions over the other.

- In Sri Lanka, China has swapped a billion dollars in debt for a 99-year lease on a strategic port.

Rewarding corruption and enabling authoritarianism: Instead of promoting open and democratic governance that enhances the capacity of civil society to hold leaders accountable, the alternative approach props up corrupt leaders, and neutralizes criticism to protect its own economic and security investments.

- In Cambodia, China stands behind an increasingly autocratic regime that cuts off opposition voices and jails opponents.

Responding to the Challenge

Simply diagnosing the source of these harmful practices that hold countries back from increasing self-reliance is not enough to solve the problem. USAID's commitment to helping countries build self-reliance demands that we take action.

The first step is to **call out these harmful practices** where we see them, and make it clear to our partners exactly why, and how, they work to impede self-reliance. We cannot effectively work with countries to respond to these challenges if we are not willing to name them. We will also emphasize the difference between other approaches and our own approach.



- As Vice President Pence told leaders of the Indo-Pacific Region at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum Chief Executive Officer Summit, “Know that the United States offers a better option. We don’t drown our partners in a sea of debt. We don’t coerce or compromise your independence. The United States deals openly, fairly. We do not offer a constricting belt or a one-way road. When you partner with us, we partner with you, and we all prosper.”

By working with our country partners, we will make **strategic investments** in programs that provide compelling alternatives and demonstrate lasting impact. Ultimately, these investments reflect an approach to partnership grounded in mutual respect and accountability, with a view toward the long-term.

We will forge and strengthen **alliances and partnerships** with donors that share our perspective. We will seek out opportunities for strategic engagements that build a shared vision for self-reliant countries that are able to chart their own development paths.